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What is claimed is:

1. A user interface for a handwriting recognition system used with a visual display

2 having a screen, said interface comprising:

3 means for opening a semi-transparent window in said display, said semi-transparent

4 window permitting a user to view features of a portion of said display over which said semi-

5 transparent window is opened, said semi-transparent window having boundaries which define a

6 contrasting area on said display.

2. The user interface of claim 1, further comprising:

an input device for inputting data from said user;

and wherein said semi-transparent window is opened automatically when said user activates said input device at a point on said screen.

3. The user interface of claim 2, wherein said semi-transparent window opens in a

2 predetermined size and position relative to said point on said screen.

1 4. The user interface of claim 3, further comprising means for permitting said user

2 to alter said size of said semi-transparent window after said semi-transparent window opens.

1 5. The user interface of claim 4, further comprising means for automatically

2 increasing said size of said semi-transparent window when said user touches said touch-

3 activated screen at a point on said touch-activated screen which is outside said borders of said

4 semi-transparent window after said semi-transparent window has been opened, said increased
5 size of said semi-transparent window including said point on said touch-activated screen which
6 is outside said borders.

1 6. The user interface of claim 3, further comprising means for permitting said user
2 to move said semi-transparent window to a new position in said display from said
3 predetermined position after said semi-transparent window has been opened.

□ 7. The user interface of claim 3, wherein said predetermined size and position are
□ alterable by said user.

2 8. The user interface of claim 1, wherein said contrasting area is of a color which
3 is different from a color of said portion of said display over which said semi-transparent
window is opened.

2 9. The user interface of claim 1, wherein said contrasting area is of a brightness
3 which is different from a brightness of said portion of said display over which said semi-
transparent window is opened.

1 10. The user interface of claim 2, wherein said opened semi-transparent window
2 closes automatically upon an elapse of a predetermined time interval during which no input by
3 said user occurs.

1 11. The user interface of claim 1, wherein said semi-transparent window opens
2 automatically when said device requires entry of information from said user.

1 12. The user interface of claim 2, further comprising means for generating a visual
2 representation on said display of movement of said input device implement by said user across
3 said screen.

1 13. The user interface of claim 12, in which said means for generating stops
2 generating said visual representation of said movement of said writing implement across said
3 display when a predetermined period of time elapses after cessation of movement of said input
4 device on said display.

1 14. The user interface of claim 2, wherein said input device is selected from the
2 group consisting of: a touch-activated screen, a mouse, a joystick, a keyboard, a trackball and
3 an electronic tablet.

1 15. A user input system for use with an electronic device, comprising:
2 an input device;
3 a visual display having a screen, said screen including means for generating an output
4 signal in response to a signal generated by said input device;
5 means for opening a semi-transparent window in said display in response to said signal
6 from said input device, said semi-transparent window permitting a user to view features of a
7 portion of said display over which said semi-transparent window is opened, said semi-

8 transparent window having boundaries which define a contrasting area on said display and
9 being sized to receive input from said input device, said input including at least one manuscript
10 character;

11 means for recognizing said at least one received manuscript character; and
12 means for displaying said at least one recognized manuscript character on said visual
13 display.

1 16. The user input system of claim 15, wherein said semi-transparent window is
□ opened automatically in response to said input from said input device.

2 17. The user input system of claim 16, wherein said semi-transparent window opens
3 in a predetermined size and position relative to a point at which said at least one manuscript
character is input.

1 18. The user input system of claim 17, further comprising means for permitting said
2 user to alter said size of said semi-transparent window after said semi-transparent window is
3 opened.

1 19. The user input system of claim 18, further comprising means for automatically
2 increasing said size of said open semi-transparent window when said at least one manuscript
3 character is input at a point on said screen which is outside said borders of said semi-
4 transparent window after said semi-transparent window has been opened, said increased size of
5 said semi-transparent window including said point which is outside said borders.

1 20. The user input system of claim 17, further comprising means for permitting said
2 user to move said semi-transparent window to a new point in said display from said
3 predetermined position after said semi-transparent window has been opened.

1 21. The user input system of claim 17, wherein said predetermined size and position
2 are alterable by said user.

1 22. The user input system of claim 15, wherein said contrasting area is of a color
2 which is different from a color of said portion of said display over which said semi-transparent
3 window is opened.

1 23. The user input system of claim 15, wherein said contrasting area is of a
2 brightness which is different from a brightness of said portion of said display over which said
3 semi-transparent window is opened.

1 24. The user input system of claim 15, wherein said open semi-transparent window
2 closes automatically upon elapse of a predetermined time interval during which no touching of
3 said touch-activated screen occurs.

1 25. The user input system of claim 15, wherein said semi-transparent window opens
2 automatically when said device requires entry of information from said user.

1 26. The user input system of claim 15, further comprising means for generating a
2 visual representation on said display of movement of said input device by said user across said
3 screen.

1 27. The user input system of claim 26, in which said means for generating stops
2 generating said visual representation of said movement of said input device across said screen
3 when a predetermined period of time elapses after any movement of said input device.

28. The user input system of claim 15, wherein said electronic device is a telephone.

29. The user input system of claim 15, wherein said electronic device is a computer.

30. The user input system of claim 15, wherein said electronic device is a personal
digital assistant.

31. The user input system of claim 15, wherein said input device is selected from
2 the group consisting of: a touch-activated screen, a mouse, a joystick, a keyboard, or trackball,
3 and an electronic tablet.

32. In a handwriting recognition system used with a visual display having a screen,

2 a method of providing a user interface, said method comprising:

3 opening a semi-transparent window in said display, said semi-transparent window

4 permitting a user to view features of a portion of said display over which said semi-transparent

5 window has opened, said semi-transparent window having boundaries which define a
6 contrasting area on said display.

1 33. The method of claim 32, wherein said semi-transparent window is opened
2 automatically when said user activates an input device for translating movement of said input
3 device into a graphical representation of said movement on said screen.

1 34. The method of claim 33, wherein said semi-transparent window opens in a
2 predetermined size and position relative to a point on said screen at which said user initiates
3 movement of said input device.

1 35. The method of claim 32, further comprising means for permitting said user to
2 alter said size of said semi-transparent window after said semi-transparent window has opened.

1 36. The method of claim 35, further comprising the step of:
2 automatically increasing said size of said open semi-transparent window when said user
3 activates said input device at a point on said display which is outside said borders of said semi-
4 transparent window after said semi-transparent window has been opened.

1 37. The method of claim 34, further comprising the step of:
2 permitting said user to move said semi-transparent window to a new position in said
3 display from said predetermined position after said semi-transparent window has opened.

1 38. The method of claim 34, wherein said predetermined size and position are
2 alterable by said user.

1 39. The method of claim 32, wherein said contrasting area is of a color which is
2 different from a color of said portion of said display over which said semi-transparent window
3 has opened.

1 40. The method of claim 32, wherein said contrasting area is of a brightness which
2 is different from a brightness of said portion of said display over which said semi-transparent
3 window has opened.

1 41. The method of claim 32, wherein said open semi-transparent window closes
2 automatically upon elapse of a predetermined time interval during which no input from said
3 input device occurs.

1 42. The method of claim 32, further comprising the step of:
2 opening said semi-transparent window automatically when said device requires entry of
3 information from said user.

1 43. The method of claim 32, further comprising the step of:
2 generating a visual representation on said display of movement of said input device by
3 said user.

1 44. The method of claim 43, further comprising the step of:

2 ceasing generating said visual representation of said movement of said input device
3 when a predetermined period of time elapses after any movement of said input device.

1 45. The method of claim 32, wherein said input device is selected from the group
2 consisting of: a touch-activated screen, a mouse, a joystick, a keyboard, a trackball, and an
3 electronic tablet.

1 46. A method of inputting data to an electronic device, comprising:
2 displaying information on a visual display having a screen;
3 generating an output signal in response to movement of an input device;
4 opening a semi-transparent window in said display in response to said movement of said
5 input device, said semi-transparent window permitting a user to view features of a portion of
6 said display over which said semi-transparent window is open, said semi-transparent window
7 having boundaries which define a contrasting area on said display and being sized to receive an
8 input from said input device, said input including at least one manuscript character;
9 recognizing said at least one manuscript character; and
10 displaying the recognized manuscript characters on the visual display.

1 47. The method of claim 46, further comprising the step of:
2 opening said semi-transparent window automatically when said user moves said input
3 device.

1 48. The method of claim 46, wherein said semi-transparent window opens in a
2 predetermined size and position relative to a point on said display at which said user
3 commences movement of said input device.

1 49. The method of claim 46, further comprising the step of:
2 permitting said user to alter said size of said open semi-transparent window after said
3 semi-transparent window opens.

6 50. The method of claim 49, further comprising the step of:
5 automatically increasing said size of said open semi-transparent window when said user
4 touches said touch-activated screen at a point on said display which is outside said borders of
3 said semi-transparent window after said semi-transparent window has been opened.

5 51. The method of claim 48, further comprising the step of:
4 permitting said user to move said semi-transparent window to a new position on said
3 display from said predetermined position after said semi-transparent window has opened.

1 52. The method of claim 48, wherein said predetermined size and position are
2 alterable by said user.

1 53. The method of claim 46, wherein said contrasting area is of a color which is
2 different from a color of said portion of said display over which said semi-transparent window
3 has opened.

1 54. The method of claim 46, wherein said contrasting area is of a brightness which
2 is different from a brightness of said portion of said display over which said semi-transparent
3 window has opened.

1 55. The method of claim 46, further comprising the step of closing said open semi-
2 transparent window automatically upon elapse of a predetermined time interval during which
3 no touching of said touch-activated screen occurs.

1 56. The method of claim 46, further comprising the step of:
2 opening said semi-transparent window automatically when said device requires entry of
3 information.

1 57. The method of claim 46, further comprising the step of:
2 generating a visual representation on said display of movement of said input device.

1 58. The method of claim 57, further comprising the step of:
2 ceasing generating of said visual representation of said movement of said input device
3 when a predetermined period of time elapses after any movement of said input device.

1 59. The method of claim 46, wherein said electronic device is a telephone.

1 60. The method of claim 46, wherein said electronic device is a computer.

1 61. The method of claim 46, wherein said electronic device is a personal digital
2 assistant.

1 62. The method on claim 46, wherein said input device is selected from the group
2 consisting of: a touch-activated screen, a mouse, a joystick, a keyboard, a trackball, and an
3 electronic tablet.

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